

## CLAIMS

I/We claim:

1. A method for formatting a publication, comprising:  
5 associating, within a server, each of a plurality of content items with a select number of sub-templates selected from a plurality of sub-templates; and

generating an instance file in the server, wherein the instance file specifies a number of content items and associates a respective one of  
10 the sub-templates with each of the content items.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the content items are user-specified content items, and wherein the generating is done in response to a request, wherein the request includes one or more request  
15 identifiers corresponding to the user-specified content items.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising, prior to the generating, receiving the request from a client computer.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the instance file also includes document-specific content items not corresponding to the request identifiers.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating an output file using the instance file and a template, the template specifying the sub-  
25 templates.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the template includes an undefined region, and wherein the generating of the output file includes employing the sub-templates in placing content items in the undefined region.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the template also includes defined location copyholes, and wherein the generating of the output file

includes placing content items not associated with sub-templates into the defined location copyholes.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the templates include differently  
5 sized ones of the sub-templates.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein one of the sub-templates has a height that is a whole number multiple of a height of another of the sub-templates.

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10. A system in a server for formatting a publication, comprising:  
means for associating, within the server, each of a plurality of  
content items with a select number of sub-templates selected from a plurality  
of sub-templates; and

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means for generating an instance file in the server, wherein the  
instance file specifies a number of content items and associates a respective  
one of the sub-templates with each of the content items.

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11. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for generating  
includes means for generating in response to a request, and wherein the  
request includes an indication of at least some of the one or more content  
items.

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12. The system of claim 11, further comprising means for receiving  
the request from a client computer.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein the instance file also includes  
document-specific content items not corresponding to the request identifiers.

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14. The system of claim 10, further comprising means for generating  
an output file using the instance file and a template, the template specifying  
the sub-templates.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the template includes an undefined region, and wherein the means for generating the output file includes means for means for employing the sub-templates to place the content items in the undefined region.

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16. The system of claim 15, wherein the template also includes a number of defined location copyholes, and wherein the means for generating the output file includes means for placing respective ones of the content items not associated with the sub-templates into the defined location copyholes.

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17. The system of claim 10, wherein the sub-templates further comprise differently sized sub-templates.

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18. The system of claim 17, wherein one of the sub-templates has a height that is a whole number multiple of a height of another of the sub-templates.

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19. A system for formatting a publication, comprising:  
a processor circuit having a processor and a memory; and  
publication formatting logic stored in the memory and executable  
by the processor, the publication formatting logic including:

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logic that associates each of a plurality of content items  
with a select number of sub-templates selected from a plurality of sub-templates; and

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20. The system of claim 19, wherein the logic that generates the instance file includes logic that generates the instance file in response to a request, and wherein the request includes an indication of at least some of the one or more content items.

21. The system of claim 20, further comprising logic that receives the request from a client computer.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the instance file also includes document-specific content items not corresponding to the request identifiers.

23. The system of claim 19, further comprising logic that generates an output file using the instance file and a template, the template specifying the sub-templates.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the template includes an undefined region, and wherein the logic that generates the output file includes logic that employs the sub-templates in placing content items in the undefined region.

25. The system of claim 19, wherein the template also includes a number of defined location copyholes, and wherein the logic that generates the output file includes logic that places content items not associated with the sub-templates into the defined location copyholes.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein the sub-templates include differently sized sub-templates.

27. The system of claim 19, wherein one of the sub-templates has a height that is a whole number multiple of a height of another of the sub-templates.